



Shalivahana





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INDIA BOOK HOUSE

SHALIVAHANA



SOON AFTER HER HUSBAND'S DEATH, GAUTAMI AND HER SON, SHATAKARNI, WERE TURNED OUT OF THEIR HOME BY HER BROTHERS.



MOTHER, WHY DID THEY THROW OUT OUR BELONGINGS? WHY ARE THEY LOCKING US OUT?

BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT US HERE, MY SON.



SHATAKARNI RAN TO THE POTTER.

WILL YOU
TEACH ME HOW
TO DO THAT,
GRANDFATHER?



THE OLD POTTER IMMEDIATELY TOOK TO
THE ENDEARING CHILD.

CERTAINLY
I WILL! MY FINGERS
ARE NOT WHAT THEY
USED TO BE,
THOUGH.



SHATAKARNI! DON'T
DISTURB HIM AT
HIS WORK. COME
AWAY.

LET HIM BE.
HE IS A DELIGHTFUL
CHILD.



MY DEAR;
YOU LOOK ILL
AND TIRED! WHY DON'T
YOU COME INSIDE AND
REST FOR A
WHILE?



HIS KINDNESS AND CONCERN WERE TOO MUCH FOR GAUTAMI AFTER THE HARSHNESS OF HER OWN KIN. SHE BROKE DOWN.

NOW, NOW. DON'T WEEP. COME IN AND TELL ME WHAT THE MATTER IS. PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU.



LATER, WHEN GAUTAMI TOLD HIM HER TALE —

WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE WITH ME? I AM OLD AND LONELY. THE LITTLE ONE COULD HELP ME AND LEARN A TRADE.

MOTHER, LET US STAY HERE. PLEASE.

I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU.



LITTLE SHATAKARNI SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME WITH THE POTTER.

GRANDFATHER, WHEN WILL YOU TEACH ME TO WORK AT THE WHEEL?

IF YOU WANT TO BECOME A POTTER, YOU MUST FIRST LEARN HOW TO KNEAD CLAY AND FIRE POTS IN THE FURNACE.



ONE HOT DAY, A WANDERING SADHU STOPPED AT THE POTTER'S HUT.

SON, MAY I HAVE SOME WATER TO DRINK?

IN A MOMENT, HOLY ONE!

WHILE SHATAKARNI WENT INTO THE HUT—

BUT FOR THE DACOITS, PRATISHTHANA WOULD BE ONE OF THE BEST CITIES THAT I HAVE PASSED THROUGH.

I KNOW. IT'S A SHAME. I'VE SEEN MANY SEASONS; BUT THE CITY HAS NOT YET SEEN A SOUL VALIANT ENOUGH TO FIGHT AND VANQUISH THE DACOITS.

JUST THEN SHATAKARNI CAME UP WITH SOME WATER.

QUENCH YOUR THIRST, HOLY ONE!



AND SHATAKARNI BEGAN TO SHAPE HIS ARMY OF CLAY FIGURES.

AH! THESE ARE READY. WHILE THEY DRY IN THE SUN, I'LL COLLECT BITS OF DRY WOOD AND TWIGS.



AFTER DRYING THEM IN THE SUN, HE BAKED THEM IN THE FURNACE USING THE WOOD AND TWIGS FOR FUEL. THE POTTER WATCHED HIM PROUDLY.

HOW PERFECT THE IMAGES ARE! THE BOY CERTAINLY HAS DEFT FINGERS!



SHATAKARNI THEN TOOK OUT THE BAKED TERRA-COTTA IMAGES...



... AND THREW THEM INTO A WELL IN THE BACKYARD. HE DID THIS SEVERAL TIMES, MUCH TO THE BAFFLEMENT OF THE POTTER. ONE DAY —

SON, WHY DO YOU THROW THOSE LOVELY TOYS INTO THE WELL? WHY DON'T YOU PLAY WITH THEM?



THEY ARE NOT TOYS, GRANDFATHER. THEY ARE THE SOLDIERS, CHARIOTS AND ANIMALS THAT I'M GOING TO NEED WHEN I BECOME KING. I'M PRESERVING THEM HERE TILL THEN.

THE CHILD HAS TAKEN THE SADHU'S WORDS SERIOUSLY!



BUT WHEN THE POTTER SAW THE EARNESTNESS AND SIMPLE FAITH OF THE CHILD, HE HID THE SMILE THAT CAME TO HIS LIPS AND SWALLOWED THE WORDS THAT ALMOST TUMBLED OUT. INSTEAD —

TRUE, MY SON. YOU ARE GOING TO NEED THEM. AND WHAT BETTER PLACE, TO PRESERVE THEM IN, THAN THIS WELL!



THE YEARS WENT BY. SHATAKARNI, NOW A YOUNG LAD, WAS A GREAT HELP TO THE AGING POTTER. HE SAT AT THE WHEEL FROM DAWN WITHOUT GETTING UP TILL THE POTTER GAVE HIM LEAVE TO DO SO. ONE DAY —

THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY, SON. YOU MAY GO AND PLAY NOW.



SHATAKARNI RAN OFF TO JOIN THE BOISTEROUS BOYS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.



THE NEXT MOMENT, SHATAKARNI WAS SITTING ASTRIDE HIS FAVOURITE BRANCH OF A STURDY SHALI TREE.



I AM A KING AND THIS IS MY VAHANA!*



A SHALI BRANCH FOR A VAHANA! THE GREAT SHALIVAHANA!*

HAIL KING SHALIVAHANA!

BORN TO VANQUISH THE DACOITS OF PRATISHTHANA!

AND I WILL, TOO. JUST WAIT TILL I'M OLDER AND STRONGER.

THEN WE WILL BE YOUR AIDES!



* VEHICLE ॥ ONE WHO HAS A SHALI TREE AS A VAHANA

LATER —

KING SHALIVAHANA IS OUT TO SEE THAT ALL IS WELL IN HIS CITY.

HA! HA! SHALIVAHANA! THAT'S A FINE NAME.

AND THE NAME STUCK.

AS SHALIVAHANA GREW OLDER, HIS LEISURE HOURS WERE SPENT WITH HIS COMPANIONS IN THE BUSY STREETS OF PRATISHTHANA. ONE SUCH EVENING —

SH! WAIT! THOSE MEN LOOK SUSPICIOUS. LET'S GO CLOSER AND LISTEN TO WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.

AS THEY DREW NEARER —

THE MERCHANT, SUVARNA'S CARAVAN LEAVES TONIGHT! AND LOADED TOO!

THEY'RE DACOITS!

SEND WORD TO THE OTHERS TO GET READY FOR THE LOOT.

THAT NIGHT, AS THE DACOITS
ATTACKED THE MERCHANT'S CARAVAN—

LEAVE HIM
ALONE!

IT WAS SHALIVAHANA AND HIS FRIENDS.
THEY BEAT UP THE DACOITS.

AS THE MISCREANTS TOOK TO THEIR
HEELS —

GOD BLESS
YOU.

LATER, AT THE DACOITS' HIDEOUT—

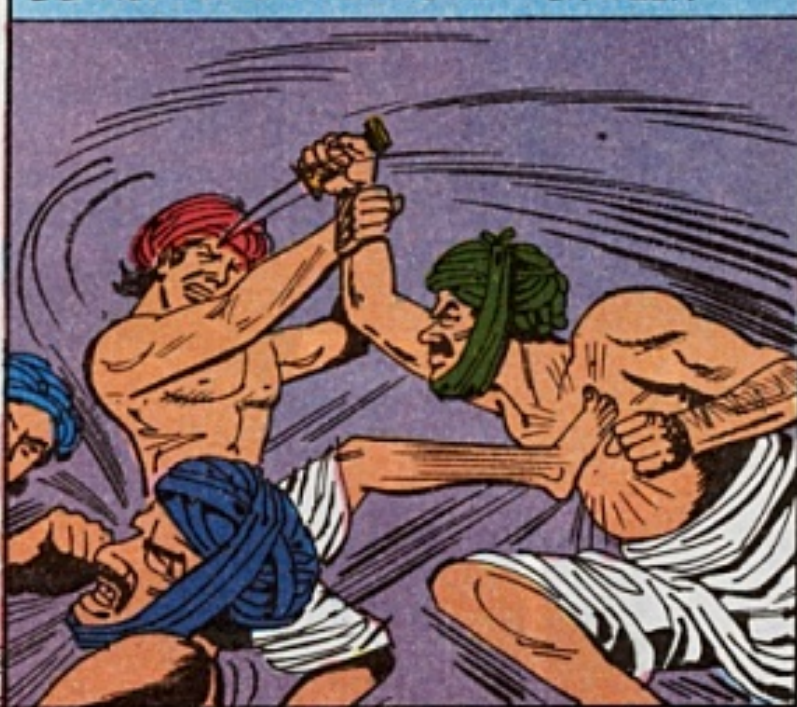
WE MUST TEACH THAT
BUSYBODY, SHALIVAHANA,
A LESSON. HE IS THE
LEADER.

WE MUST
GET RID OF
HIM. IT WON'T
BE DIFFICULT.

ONE EVENING, AS SHALIVAHANA AND HIS FRIENDS WERE RETURNING HOME —



SHALIVAHANA AND HIS FRIENDS HOWEVER DID NOT FLINCH. THEY FOUGHT BRAVELY.



SOON —



AFTER THIS INCIDENT, SHALIVAHANA ARMED HIMSELF AND HIS FRIENDS WITH SWORDS, SPEARS AND DAGGERS. HE ORGANISED A REGULAR PATROL TO KEEP PRATISHTHANA SAFE AND PEACEFUL.



THE PEOPLE OF PRATISHTHANA ENCOURAGED AND HELPED THEM. ONE EVENING—

SHALIVAHANA, YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS HAVE BROUGHT PROSPERITY TO OUR CITY. IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU?

ALL WE NEED IS YOUR SUPPORT TO GET RID OF THOSE DACOITS.

THE PROSPEROUS TRADERS SHOWERED GIFTS ON SHALIVAHANA.

PLEASE ACCEPT THIS HORSE.

THESE SWORDS ARE FOR YOU—FROM THE BLACKSMITHS.

THE DACOITS WERE ALARMED BY THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

NOW SHALIVAHANA HAS ARMS AND HORSES AS WELL!

HE WILL PUT US OUT OF BUSINESS. HE MUST BE FINISHED.

BUT HOW? HE IS STRONGER THAN WE ARE.

NOT CLEVERER, THOUGH!

THE DACOITS DISGUISED THEMSELVES AS MERCHANTS AND WENT TO THE COURT OF KING NAHAPANA, THE SUZERAIN OF PRATISHTHANA.

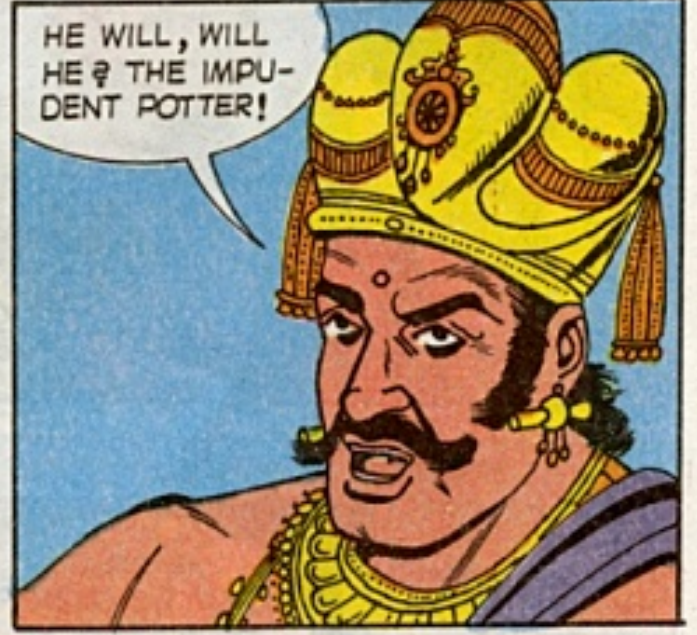
SIR, A POTTER CALLED SHALIVAHANA PERSECUTES INNOCENT CITIZENS AND...

AND WHAT? SPEAK UP, MAN!

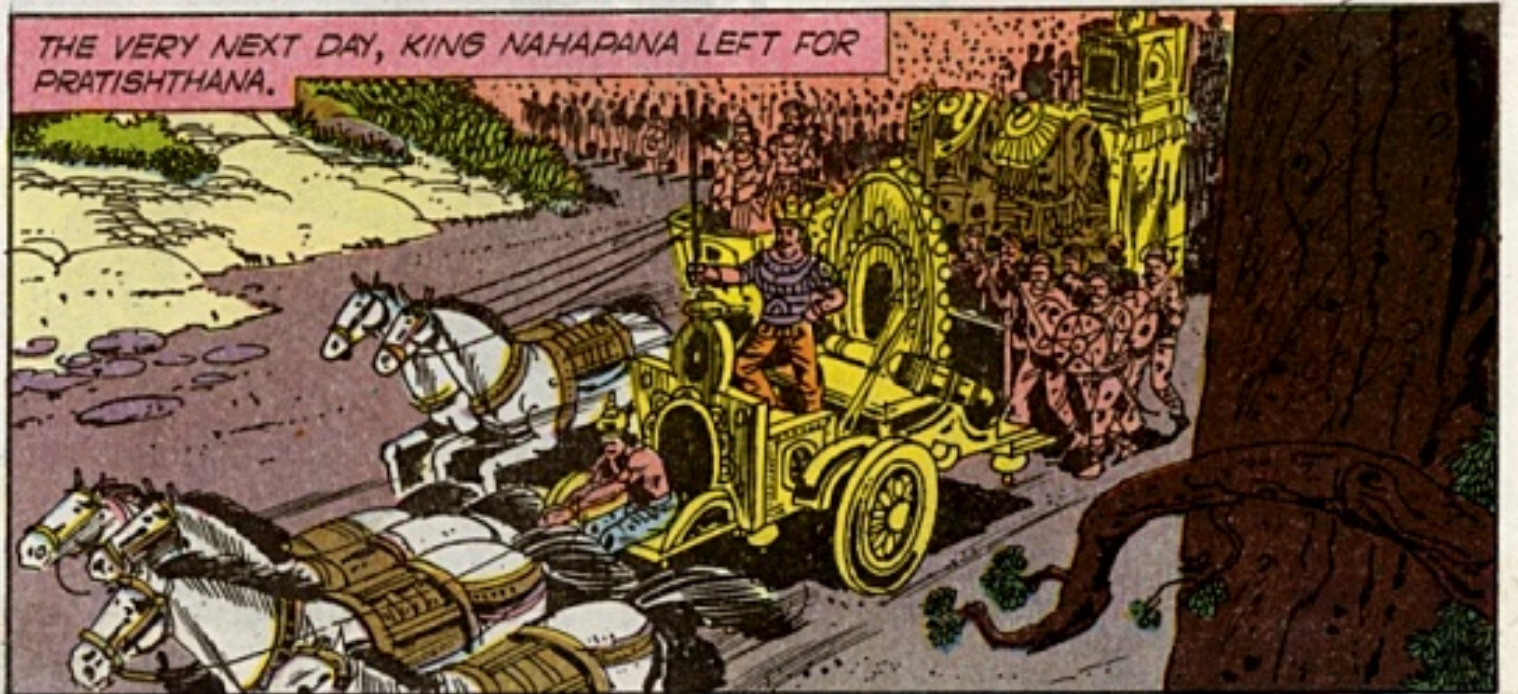


PARDON US, SIR. HE SAYS, HE WILL SOON DETHRONE YOU.

HE WILL, WILL HE? THE IMPUDENT POTTER!



THE VERY NEXT DAY, KING NAHAPANA LEFT FOR PRATISHTHANA.



AT PRATISHTHANA —

HAVE YOU HEARD?
KING NAHAPANA IS
MARCHING TOWARDS
PRATISHTHANA WITH
A HUGE ARMY!



I SUGGEST,
WE SEEK THE
HELP OF KING
VIKRAMADITYA
OF UJJAYINI.

IF WE DO, HE
MIGHT ANNEXE
PRATISHTHANA.
NO, WE SHALL
NOT SEEK OUT-
SIDE HELP.

YOUR DECISION
IS WISE. WHAT IF
WE ARE FEW
IN NUMBER? THE
PEOPLE ARE WITH
US. WITH THEIR
SUPPORT, WE'LL RE-
PULSE THE
ATTACK.



MOST OF THE MEN OF PRATISHTHANA
RALLIED ROUND SHALIVAHANA AND LAY
WAITING BEHIND TREES AND ROCKS
ALONG THE ROUTE TO THE CITY.



AS SOON AS THE APPROACHING ARMY WAS
SIGHTED —



CHARGE!

NAHAPANA AND HIS MEN WERE TAKEN UNAWARES.



IN THE BLOODY BATTLE THAT ENSUED, NAHAPANA WAS KILLED.

VICTORY TO SHALIVAHANA!



WHEN SHALIVAHANA RETURNED TO PRATISHTHANA —

LONG LIVE KING SHALIVAHANA!

MY SON! MY NOBLE SON!



WHEN SHALIVAHANA ASCENDED THE THRONE AT PRATISHTHANA, THE SCHOLARS, SARVA VARMA AND GUNADHYA BECAME HIS MINISTERS.



ONCE, WHILE HE WAS OUT ON A HUNT WITH GUNADHYA, THEY CAME ACROSS A SAGE OUTSIDE HIS HERMITAGE. THE SAGE BLESSED THEM.

MAY YOUR REIGN BE A LONG AND PEACEFUL ONE, SHALIVAHANA.

HE THEN TOOK THEM INTO HIS HUT.

WHAT A RADIANT FACE SHE HAS! HER EYES SHINE WITH INTELLIGENCE!

WHO IS SHE, REVERED ONE?

SHE IS MY DISCIPLE. HER NAME IS NAGANIKA. SHE IS THE DAUGHTER OF A NAGA CHIEF, AN EXCEPTIONALLY CLEVER GIRL!

AS SHALIVAHANA RODE AWAY FROM THE HERMITAGE —

LATER AT THE PALACE—

I CAN'T GET
THAT GIRL OUT
OF MY MIND.

I'LL SPEAK
TO HER FATHER.
THE KINGDOM
NEEDS A
QUEEN.

NAGANIKA'S FATHER READILY AGREED TO THE
PROPOSAL, AND SHALIVAHANA AND NAGANIKA
WERE MARRIED.

WELCOME
HOME, MY
CHILDREN. MAY
YOU ALWAYS BE
PROSPEROUS
AND ENJOY A
LONG LIFE
TOGETHER.

A FEW DAYS LATER, AS THE YOUNG
COUPLE WERE BATHING IN THE PALACE
POOL —

MODAKA...!

IMMEDIATELY THE KING TURNED
TO HIS ATTENDANTS.

THE QUEEN WISHES
TO EAT MODAKA*.
HAVE SOME BROUGHT
HERE.

NAGANIKA BURST OUT LAUGHING.

HA! HA! HA!
HO! HO! HO!

I DIDN'T ASK FOR
MODAKA! I
MADE A PUN ON
THE WORDS MA*
AND UDAKA.卐

MY IGNORANCE SHAMES
ME, MY QUEEN. YOU DE-
SERVED A SCHOLAR FOR
A HUSBAND. NOT A
FOOL LIKE ME!

NEVER SAY THAT
AGAIN, MY LORD. I AM
PROUD TO BE YOUR
WIFE AND I LOVE
YOU WITH ALL MY
HEART.

NAGANIKA'S WORDS, HOWEVER, DID NOT SOOTHE HIS WOUNDED FEELINGS.

IF I HAD LEARNT
SANSKRIT, I WOULD
NOT HAVE MADE A
FOOL OF MYSELF
TODAY. I WILL LEARN
THE LANGUAGE.

* NO 卐 WATER HENCE MODAKA = DON'T SPLASH WATER.

HE SENT FOR HIS LEARNED MINISTERS.

HOW LONG DOES
IT TAKE TO LEARN
SANSKRIT,
GUNADHYA?

IT
USUALLY
TAKES TWELVE
YEARS, BUT YOU
COULD DO IT IN
SIX.

AND WHAT
DO YOU HAVE
TO SAY,
SARVA VARMA?

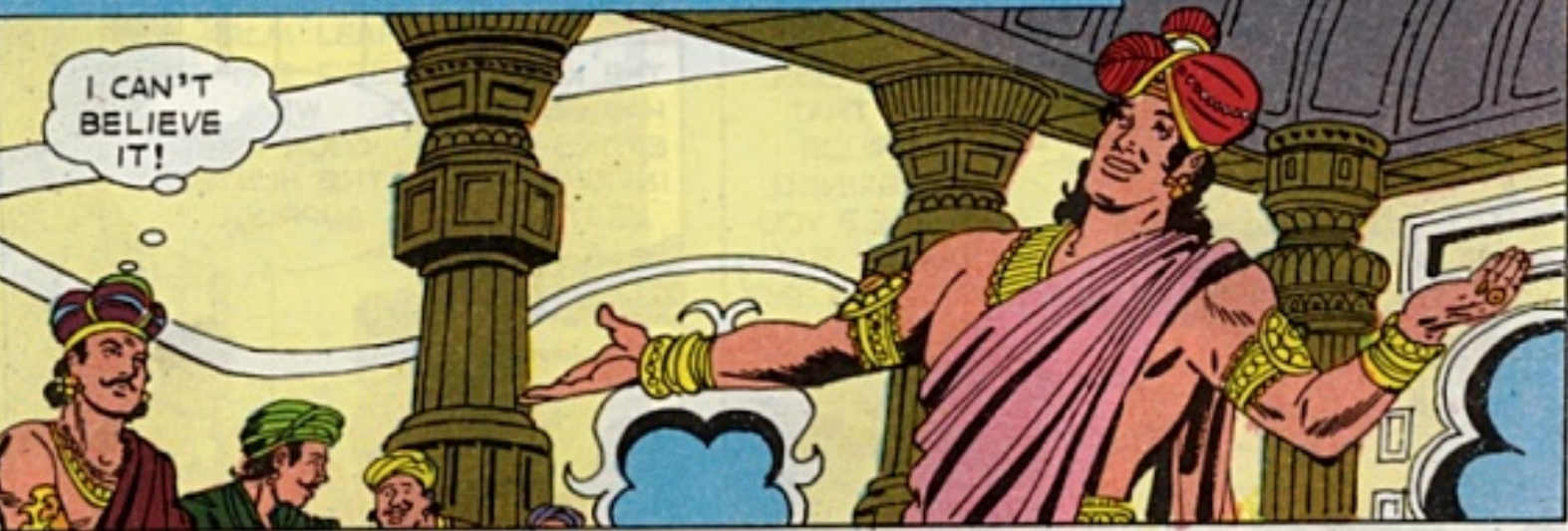
I CAN
TEACH IT TO
YOU IN SIX
MONTHS, MY
LORD.

IT'S A VAIN BOAST,
MY LORD! IF I, AM
PROVED WRONG, I
SHALL FOREVER
GIVE UP SPEAKING
SANSKRIT AS WELL AS
PRAKRIT.*

SARVA VARMA AND HIS PUPIL WORKED HARD DAY
AND NIGHT.

SIX MONTHS LATER, THE KING APPEARED BEFORE THE SCHOLARS OF THE COURT AND ADDRESSED THEM IN FLAWLESS SANSKRIT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!



AT THE END OF THE SESSION, GUNADHYA WENT UP TO THE KING...



... BOWED BEFORE HIM ...



... AND TURNED TO WALK AWAY.



GUNADHYA! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

HOW CAN I REPLY? I HAVE VOWED NOT TO SPEAK IN THE ONLY LANGUAGES I KNOW! AND PAISHACHI* WHICH THE KING KNOWS, I DON'T.



A FEW MONTHS LATER, TWO PAISHACHAS CALLED ON SHALIVAHANA.



YOUR MAJESTY, WE BRING YOU THIS GREAT PAISHACHI CLASSIC, BRIHAT-KATHA WRITTEN BY OUR GURU.

A CLASSIC IN THAT CRUDE UNREFINED LANGUAGE? YOU MAY TAKE IT BACK. I DON'T HAVE THE TIME FOR IT.

SOON AFTER, SHALIVAHANA FELL ILL. THE ROYAL PHYSICIAN SENT FOR THE COOK.

THE KING HAS BEEN EATING INFERIOR MEAT.

WE COOK WHAT THE HUNTERS SUPPLY, SIR.



WHEN THE HUNTERS WERE SUMMONED—



IT'S THAT BRAHMAN IN THE VINDHYA FOREST! HE READS OUT HIS VERSES AND ALL THE ANIMALS STOP TO LISTEN, OBLIVIOUS OF HUNGER AND THIRST. THAT'S WHAT HAS MADE THEM LEAN AND UNHEALTHY!

HE MUST BE A GREAT SAGE! I MUST VISIT HIM.

SHALIVAHANA WENT TO THE FOREST. AS HE HEARD THE HERMIT RECITE HIS COMPOSITIONS—

WHY, I NEVER DREAMT THAT PAISHACHI COULD SOUND SO MUSICAL!



SUDDENLY —

HE'S THROWING
THAT PALM LEAF
INTO THE FIRE!

STOP!

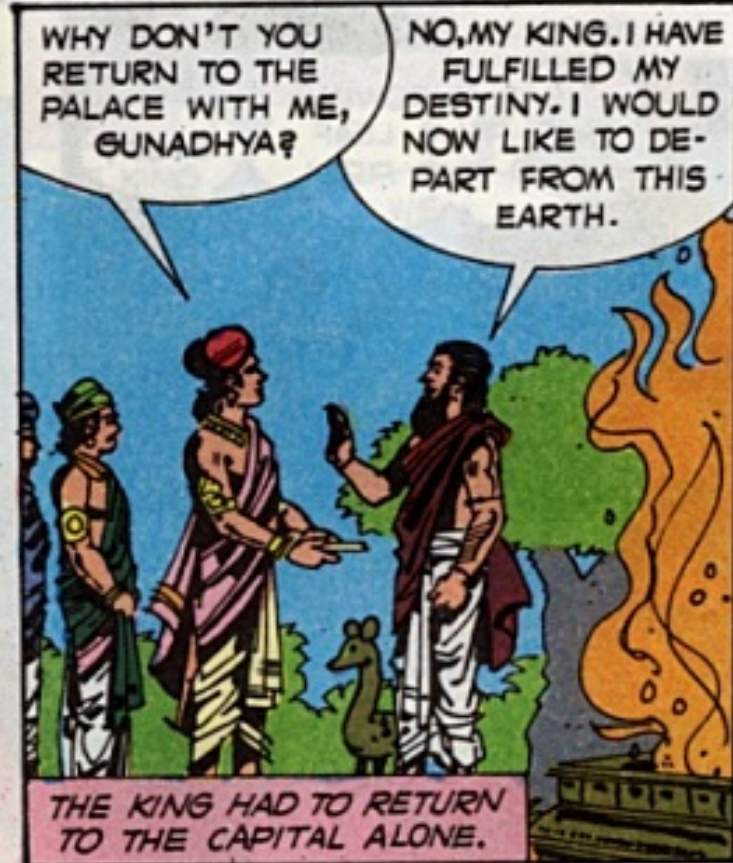
AS SHALIVAHANA RUSHED FORWARD TO WREST
THE PALM LEAF MANUSCRIPT FROM THE HERMIT—

GUNADHYA!
YOU?

GUNADHYA SMILED SADLY AND SPOKE
TO SHALIVAHANA IN PAISHACHI.

YES, I LEARNT
PAISHACHI HERE IN
THE FOREST AND
COMPOSED THE
BRIHATKATHA FOR
YOU.

SADDENED BY YOUR
REJECTION, I HAVE
BEEN DESTROYING
MY WORK.



THE VETALA REACHED PRATISH-
THANA WHERE HE HEARD ABOUT
THE EXPLOITS OF THE KING
WHO WAS ONCE A POTTER.

PEOPLE HERE EXTOL THIS KING
EVEN AS WE DO VIKRAMADITYA.
IF THE TALES OF HIS GLORY AND
GREATNESS ARE TRUE, HE IS
WITHOUT DOUBT A THREAT TO
MY KING.

THE VETALA ENTERED THE COURT OF SHALI-
VAHANA.

I COME FROM VIKRAMADITYA'S
COURT. YOU WERE NOT BORN OF
A ROYAL FAMILY. BUT IF YOU
ARE A TRUE KING, I CHAL-
LENGE YOU TO A
WRESTLING BOUT.

I ACCEPT
YOUR
CHALLENGE.

THE VETALA SPRANG FORWARD AND...

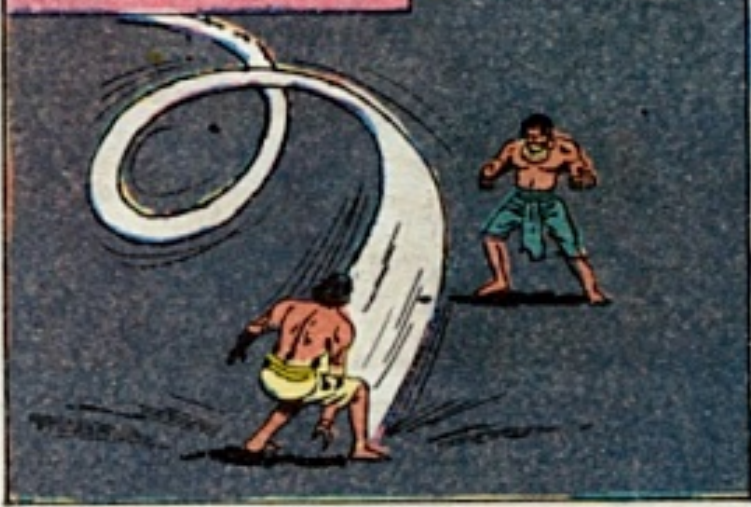


... THREW HIM TO THE GROUND.

... LIFTING SHALIVAHANA ...



BUT SHALIVAHANA FELL ON HIS FEET AND QUICKLY ROSE UP TO FACE THE VETALA ONCE AGAIN.



MERCY, O KING!
YOU HAVE
WON.



THIS IS THE VERY
MAN, THE POTTER,
WHO IS DESTINED
TO DEFEAT KING
VIKRAMADITYA.

AND IN A FAIR BOUT,
LEAVE MY KINGDOM AND
DON'T DARE COME
HERE AGAIN!

THE VETALA RETURNED TO VIKRAMADITYA'S COURT.

I HAVE FOUND THE POTTER. HE IS NONE OTHER THAN KING SHALIVAHANA. BUT I COULD NOT KILL HIM. HE DEFEATED ME IN A FAIR FIGHT.

DEFEATED YOU? THEN I MUST VANQUISH HIM!



WHEN NEWS OF VIKRAMADITYA'S IMPENDING ATTACK REACHED PRATISHTHANA —

PREPARE TO GIVE BATTLE. HE IS A MIGHTY FOE.

NOT TOO MIGHTY FOR US, YOUR MAJESTY!



BEFORE LEAVING, SHALIVAHANA WENT TO SEEK HIS MOTHER'S BLESSINGS.

VICTORY SHALL BE YOURS.



AT THE HEAD OF HIS COMPARATIVELY SMALL ARMY, SHALIVAHANA MARCHED FORTH TO FACE THE MIGHTY VIKRAMADITYA AND HIS VAST ARMIES.



SOON, THE TWO ARMIES STOOD FACE TO FACE. VIKRAMADITYA TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE FORCES OF HIS ENEMY.

SO THAT'S THE KING AND
THAT HIS ARMY! HA! HA!
THEY DO FRIGHTEN
ME!

SHALIVAHANA
HAS INVITED HIS
DOOM.

ATTACK!

THE TWO ARMIES MET AND A BLOODY BATTLE ENSUED.



MEANWHILE IN THE SEVERAL VILLAGES AND TOWNS NEAR BY—



MEN MARCHED TO THE BATTLE-FIELD FROM EVERY DIRECTION.





VIKRAMADITYA'S FORCES STARTED RETREATING.

WHERE DID OUR KING SHALIVAHANA POST ALL THESE FORCES? AND THOSE WAR ANIMALS?

I CANNOT BUT BELIEVE THAT THE IMAGES HE MADE AS A CHILD HAVE COME TO LIFE TO AID HIM.



AT LAST VIKRAMADITYA FELL.

LONG LIVE SHALIVAHANA!

LONG LIVE THE KING OF KINGS!



AT UJJAYINI, AS SHALIVAHANA ASCENDED THE THRONE OF VIKRAMADITYA—

TO COMMEMORATE OUR GREAT VICTORY, THIS DAY SHALL MARK THE COMMENCEMENT OF A NEW ERA—SHALIVAHANA SHAKA.*



THE DAY SHALIVAHANA, THE SON OF A DESTITUTE WIDOW, BECAME THE EMPEROR OF UJJAYINI, IS OBSERVED AS NEW YEAR'S DAY, TO THIS DAY IN MAHARASHTRA, KARNATAKA AND OTHER PARTS OF INDIA.



Illustrated Classics From India

Shalivahana

King Shalivahana is credited with the introduction of a new era named after him, and referred to as the Shalivahana Shaka. It was initiated to commemorate his magnificent victory over Vikramaditya of Ujjaini in 78 AD. Even today, Hindus use the Shalivahana Shaka to record births, marriages and other auspicious events.

The Vikrama Charita, a Sanskrit classic composed in the 11th century, supports this view. Apart from this work and a few popular legends, there is no concrete evidence to support this theory. Brought up as a potter, the brave and good Shalivahana was destined to become a great king, and this prophecy was well fulfilled.

History records that Gautami's son Shatakarni of the Shatavahana dynasty, defeated the powerful King Nahapana of the Satraps. The folklore of Maharashtra identifies the same Shatakarni with Shalivahana.

The content for this Amar Chitra Katha title is derived from the Sanskrit classic Kathasaritsagara and Vikrama Charita, as well as from popular folk tales on this legendary hero.

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